

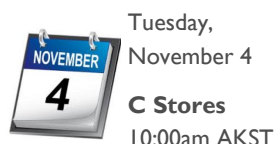


Alaska WIC Vendor Newsletter

October 2014 — Volume 12, Issue 8

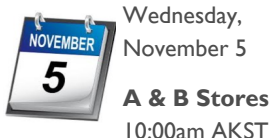
VENDOR TELECONFERENCES:

Please make sure a Manager or WIC Trainer attends one of the following teleconferences.



Tuesday,
November 4

C Stores
10:00am AKST



Wednesday,
November 5

A & B Stores
10:00am AKST

1 (800) 281-5354
Passcode: 259225

Interactive vendor training is required by federal regulations. This is your opportunity to get updates and ask your questions!



FALL PRICE SURVEYS DUE OCT. 22! We would like to thank everyone who has submitted a complete price survey. If you have not done so already, please submit your Price Survey to us no later than October 22, 2014. Your submissions are used to calculate the maximum allowable reimbursements (MAR) for your peer groups.

WIC Changes in the Mirror: How Did We Do?

Please participate in one of our teleconferences (November 4 or 5) to help us understand how changes implemented since October 1, 2013, have affected your experience with WIC.

Last October, the State WIC Program began a transition to the SPIRIT management information system and a new check processing contractor and system. The transition was completed in March 2014.

- How well did the transition work for your store?
- What lessons should the Vendor Management staff learn – how can we make program changes easier, smoother, less disruptive to your business?
- Are there issues or problems with the new systems that you wish us to address?

In March, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, provided the “Final Food Rule” to the state WIC programs. A decade in development, the rule is intended to give participants additional choices of healthy foods and to provide lower fat versions of some foods to help reduce the incidence of obesity and diabetes.

As required by the USDA rule, on October 1, 2014, Alaska reduced the amounts of whole and 2% milk prescribed, increased the amount of 1% or nonfat milk, added whole wheat pasta and canned mackerel to our Approved Food List, developed a substitution table of bananas for specific amounts of infant fruits and vegetables, and approved additional 100% whole wheat breads. In April 2015, some whole and lowfat yogurt will be approved for the Food List.

Some changes announced in the rule were not new to Alaska. For instance, we already allowed nonfat refried beans to be purchased, but we recently approved eight specific brands that may be purchased by our participants.

- How did the rule change affect your store?
- Have you had any feedback from participants about the new foods or the change to lower fat milks?
- What improvements do you suggest for our Approved Food List / Participant ID booklet? We are currently revising it and would appreciate comments about how to make it more helpful. In addition to the teleconferences, we will accept comments by phone, mail, or fax through November 15, 2014.

Alaska's Alternative Cost Containment Project

Federal regulations require the WIC Program, the third largest federal food assistance program, to contain costs through a system of vendor peer groups and maximum allowable reimbursements for WIC food purchases. Since Alaska has geographical and logistic challenges for doing business that are unique among the states, the WIC Program has initiated a study to examine the business environment and develop a more appropriate method to slow the growth of food costs.

The University of Alaska Anchorage Center for Economic Development and Rosewood LLC have begun work on the project, which is funded by a special USDA grant. You may be contacted by the project staff or our office for information about how the current cost containment system affects your operations. Based on information gathered in the coming months, the project will work with State staff to develop an alternative to propose to USDA that will keep costs down with less impact to vendors.

After receiving USDA's approval, we expect to implement any alternative cost containment system with the new vendor agreements for the contract period of October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2018. We look forward to a conversation with you about how we can best provide WIC foods to participants Alaska-style.

The USDA recently released a report titled "Cost Containment in the WIC Program: Peer Groups and Reimbursement Rates" that is available on the agency's website at www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err171.

WIC Vendor Training Available!

We have posted a new WIC Vendor Training PowerPoint on our website at: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/nutri/wic/vendors/default.aspx>. The training takes about 12 minutes. We will also be very happy to answer questions or follow up with more training via teleconference when it is convenient for you and your staff.



No Rain Checks

Please pay close attention to the following three most common rejection reasons and ask for training from your supervisor if needed. The following numbers are for July, August and September.

275

Missing participant's signature

Please remember that our WIC participants pay with WIC checks and **ALL checks** require a signature to be reimbursable. Depositing a check without a signature is a fatal error and cannot be re-deposited.

154

Missing sale date

Without a sale date we have no way of verifying if a check was used during the valid dates. The check will be rejected unless the store endorses the back with a sale date.

113

Missing vendor stamp

Before depositing your checks flip through them to ensure each has a vendor stamp. The check will be rejected if the vendor stamp box is empty. Also, handwritten vendor numbers will be rejected.

Please call our office at (907) 465-3100 before depositing any questionable checks. If you have rejected checks that you believe should not have been rejected you may submit a WIC Check Appeal Request Form directly to our State Office in Juneau.

WIC Food Changes Take Effect October 1

On March 4, 2014, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published the "Final Food Rule," a regulation that affects the WIC food items that authorized WIC vendors may or must provide to WIC participants. These changes went into effect October 1, 2014. To summarize these changes, WIC staff published a short insert for clients and vendors alike. **An image of the insert is on the next page.** If you would like more copies please contact us.

WIC Food Changes: Effective October 1, 2014

WHOLE GRAINS

Whole Wheat bread must be 100% whole wheat. These whole wheat breads have been added to the existing allowed food list.

Whole wheat approved pastas must be 100% whole wheat.



Guerrero 100% WW Tortillas, 16oz



Mission 100% WW Tortillas, 16oz



Kroger WW Tortillas, 16oz



Carlita 100% WW Tortillas, 16oz



Ortega 100% WW Tortillas, 16oz



Safeway "O" Organic WW Pasta, 16oz



Westbrae WW Spaghetti, 16oz



Bella Terra 100% WW pastas, 16oz



Fred Meyer 100% WW Hot Dog Buns, 14oz



Kroger 100% WW Hoagie Buns, 14.5oz



Fred Meyer 100% WW Hamburger Buns, 14oz



Country Oven 100% WW Hamburger Buns, 24oz



Country Oven 100% WW White, 24oz



Fred Meyer 100% WW Bread, 16oz

Fred Meyer
Save time, money & gas.

Fred Meyer 100% WW Tender Twist, 24oz



Simple Truth Organic WW Pasta, 16oz



Hodgson Mill WW Pastas, 16oz



Racconto 100% WW Pastas, 16oz

CANNED FISH

Atlantic mackerel, Chub Pacific mackerel, or Jack mackerel are allowed. King mackerel is not allowed. **15oz sizes only.**

MILK

WIC checks will specify eligible types of milk

LEGUMES

Refried beans without added sugars, fats (fat free), oils, vegetables, or meats. Please choose low sodium varieties of beans, fruits, and vegetables when available.



Bearitos, 16oz cans



Bush's 16oz cans



Casa Fiesta, 16oz cans



Fred Meyer 16oz cans



Goya 16oz cans



Great Value 16oz cans



La Preferida 16oz cans



Ortega 16oz

INFANT FOODS

Bananas (up to 4) may be substituted for a portion of jarred fruits and vegetables.

Infant Food Quantities	
64 oz Infant fruits and vegetables	
No Bananas 	Sixteen 4 oz jars
	Ten 6 oz jars plus
	One 4 oz jar
	Sixteen 2 pks (3.5 oz) plus Two 4 oz jars
	AND Fifteen 4 oz jars
	or Ten 6 oz jars
	or Eight 2 pks (3.5 oz) plus One 4 oz jar
	AND Fourteen 4 oz jars
	or Nine 6 oz jars
	or Eight 2 pks (3.5 oz)
	AND Thirteen 4 oz jars
	or Eight 6 oz jars plus one 4 oz jar
	And Twelve 4 oz jars
	or Eight 6 oz jars
	or Six 2 pks (7 oz)

FOODS NO LONGER ON WIC

Wheat tortillas allowed only if on this list. Please exclude previously authorized WIC wheat tortillas

Health and Social Services

Alaska WIC Program
Div. of Public
Assistance
P.O. Box 110612
Juneau, AK 99811

Phone: 907-465-3100
Fax: 907-465-3416
E-mail:

Vendors!

Please post this newsletter
for your staff to read



Fat-free and/or 1% UHT milk have mostly replaced the required 2% UHT.

Please make sure your store has the required quantities of non-fat and 1% low-fat to meet the minimum stock requirements. A copy of the minimum stock requirements is available on our website or by request.

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/nutri/wic/vendors/default.aspx>

Contacting the WIC Vendor Unit

The Vendor Unit will provide assistance to vendors at any time. For questions or complaints, please contact us and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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IF YOU FIND LOST CHECKS: Please notify your local WIC agency or the State Office immediately at (907) 465-3100 so the checks can be returned to the participant.

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